

The multi-volume *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* is the first attempt to present a comprehensive picture of this subject. The publication of this work falls well within UNESCO's terms of reference since the underlying research was conducted by a distinguished international team of specialists which for many years laboured in harmony at the task of presenting to a wider public the civilizations of this vast area located at the heart of the Eurasian continent.

The volumes will reveal the cultures that flourished and vanished in this area, from the dawn of civilization to the present time. Only a few names such as those of Samarkand, Bukhara or Khiva, are familiar to a wider public; eminent specialists, many of them native to the region, now lift the curtain to reveal a richer, more varied civilization. To a great extent, the history of the ancient and medieval world was shaped by the movements of peoples in this heartland of Eurasia, stretching from the Caspian Sea in the west to the borders of China proper in the east.

The sixth volume brings this series to an end as it takes in the whole of the modern period from colonial conquest and domination to decolonization, the Cold War from start to finish, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and renewed instability in major parts of the region.

Not only did the colonial regimes lay a new patina over the region, but the many nationalisms remoulded all old identities into a series of new ones.

That process of the twentieth century was perhaps the most transformative of all after the colonial subjugation of the nineteenth; and while it has been the basis of remarkable stability in vast stretches of the region, it has been a fertile source of tension and even wars in other parts.

If the experience of the region over this century and a half is to be summed up, it is characterized by colonial domination, national mobilization and modernization, with their implications in each walk of life; but the impact and the results of each of these were astonishingly variable despite the proximity of these states to each other and their being subject to or driven by virtually the same compulsions.

The Co-Editors

HISTORY OF
CIVILIZATIONS
OF CENTRAL
ASIA

VI



Towards
the contemporary
period:
from the
mid-nineteenth
to the end
of the twentieth
century

President:
Chalbiyar Adle
Co-editors:
Madhavan K. Palat
and
Anana Talybaliyeva

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Volume VI

Towards the contemporary period:
from the mid-nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century



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U N E S C O P u b l i s h i n g



History of civilizations of Central Asia

Volume I

The dawn of civilization:
earliest times to 700 B.C.

Volume II

The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations:
700 B.C. to A.D. 250

Volume III

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from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century

Volume VI

Towards the contemporary period:
from the mid-nineteenth
to the end of the
twentieth century

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from the mid-nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century

President: Chahryar Adle

*Co-Editors: Madhavan K. Palat
and Anara Tabysgalieva*

M u l t i p l e H i s t o r y S e r i e s

U N E S C O P u b l i s h i n g

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Published in 2005 by the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP

Coordinated by I. Iskender-Mochiri
English text edited by Jana Gough

Composed by Desk (France)
Printed by Ages Arti Grafiche, Turin (Italy)

ISBN 92-3-103985-7

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IRAN AND ITS EASTERN REGIONS (1848–1989)*

N. Nasiri-Moghaddam

The last Qajar kings (1848–1925)

NASER AL-DIN SHAH (1848–96)

When the third king of the Qajar dynasty, Mohammad Shah (1834–48), died on 5 September 1848,¹ the queen mother Mahd-e ‘Olia (1805–73), with the collaboration of a few leading figures at court, set up an interim government that ran the country until the arrival in Tehran of Crown Prince Naser al-Din Mirza. The latter, who was 17 years old at the time (born on 17 July 1831) and governor of Azerbaijan, proclaimed himself shah on 13 September 1848. Then, on 20 October, thanks to the efforts of Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Nezam (1808–52), head of the new army of Azerbaijan, and with the backing of the Russian and British consulates in Tabriz, he marched in triumph to the capital. After his accession to the throne, the young king appointed Mirza Taqi Khan prime minister (*sadr-e a‘zam*) with the title of Amir Kabir.²

Naser al-Din Shah was to rule Persia for almost half a century. In domestic policy, at the beginning of this long reign, Amir Kabir consolidated the throne by crushing all revolts, in particular those of Salar and the *Bāb* (Gateway to Truth). Mohammad Hasan Khan Qajar Davallu, known as Salar (?–1850), a maternal cousin of the royal family, had started an uprising in Khurasan towards the end of the reign of Mohammad Shah. After the accession of Naser al-Din Shah, at the request of Amir Kabir, one of the shah’s paternal uncles called Sultan Morad Mirza (1818–83) was appointed governor of Khurasan.³ In June 1849 the latter, after several months of fighting, laid siege to Mashhad,

* See Map 6, p. 946.

1. In the preceding volume of this collection, the date of Mohammad Shah Qajar’s death is given incorrectly as 20 March 1848. He in fact died on 5 September 1848 (6 Shavval 1264). See Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, p. 351; Khurmaji, 1965, p. 36.

2. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 358–62; Mostowfi, 1981, Vol. 1, p. 65; Amanat, 1993, pp. 1003–4.

3. Eqbal Ashtiyani, 1984, pp. 132–4.

whose inhabitants eventually surrendered in March 1850. Shortly afterwards Salar was captured and put to death by strangulation on 28 April 1850.⁴

As for Sayyed 'Ali Mohammad Shirazi (1819–50), known as the *Bāb*, he had begun in 1844 by proclaiming himself to be the representative of the Twelfth Shi'ite Imam, the awaited Mahdi, and later to be the Imam himself.⁵ A disciple of Sayyed Kazem Rashti (1798–1843), leader of the Shaykhis, a religious movement founded by Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i (1753–1826), the *Bāb* had gathered numerous followers among the Shaykhis, who, after the death of their chief, were searching for the Imam Mahdi.⁶ As far back as September 1845, the *Bāb* had been arrested and several times brought before the Shi'ite *'ulamā'*; he was punished and imprisoned, initially at Shiraz (1845–6), then at Isfahan (1846–7), and from July 1847 in the fortress of Maku in the north-western frontier region of Persia. One of the *Bāb's* adepts, a certain Molla Hoseyn Boshruye'i (1814–49), then went to Khurasan to spread his master's message.⁷ It was in this region, more precisely at Bedasht, a village to the north of Shahrud, that in July 1848 Boshruye'i and his fellow-believers organized a gathering at which an audacious *Bābi* poetess called Qorrat al-'Eyn (1817–52) unveiled herself before her brothers in the faith and declared openly that *Bābism* constituted a formal break with Islamic law (*sharī'a*).⁸

When Naser al-Din Shah came to power, Boshruye'i and a large number of *Bābis* were already barricaded in a citadel in the forests of Mazandaran, where they fought for several months against the troops sent by the government.⁹ In early February 1849 Boshruye'i was killed and his fellow-believers, after holding out for four months, were all massacred.¹⁰ About a year later, the *Bābis* again revolted, but this time at Zanzan in Azerbaijan (May–June 1850) and at Neyriz in Fars (May 1850–January 1851).¹¹ They were again severely repressed. To put an end to this unrest in the country, the shah gave the order, at the suggestion of Amir Kabir, that the *Bāb*, imprisoned since May 1848 in the fortress of Chahriq near Urmia, be transferred to Tabriz and executed publicly in July 1850.¹²

During his short term of office (1848–51), Amir Kabir consolidated the royal authority and its institutions and also introduced a number of administrative,

4. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 375–84, 387–99, 403–19.

5. MacEoin, 1989, pp. 279–80; see also Chapter 10 on Persia in the preceding volume of this collection.

6. MacEoin, 1979; Browne (ed.), 1918; Nicolas, 1905.

7. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 421–2.

8. Tag, 1942, pp. 35–6; Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 428–9.

9. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 429–35.

10. Ibid., pp. 436–47.

11. Ibid., pp. 447–59.

12. Gobineau, 1928, pp. 211–12; Momen, 1981, pp. 78–9.

military, health, educational and financial reforms which displeased certain government officials and notables.¹³ They therefore plotted with the queen mother to obtain, first, the dismissal of Amir Kabir in November 1851; and then his execution in January 1852.¹⁴ This tragic episode left a blot on the history of Naser al-Din Shah's reign.

Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri E'temad al-Dowle (1807–65), an influential pro-British notable at the court, a former interior minister and one of the plotters against Amir Kabir, succeeded him in November 1851. A few months later, in August 1852, the *Bābī*s followers sought to avenge his execution by attempting to assassinate the shah.¹⁵ This unsuccessful attempt provided the government with a pretext to arrest and execute most of the *Bābī*s, including their heroine Qorrat al-'Eyn.¹⁶ However, their successors, Mirza Yahya Nuri Sobh-e Azal (1830–1912) and his half-brother Mirza Hoseyn 'Ali Nuri Baha'ullah (1817–92), who were both related to the prime minister, were not put to death and later, outside Persia, propagated two new religions, Azali *Bābism* and Baha'ism.¹⁷ This explains why the shah continued to fear the *Bābī*s for the remainder of his reign.¹⁸

Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri was dismissed in August 1858, when the shah abolished the post of prime minister and appointed ministers to head several newly established ministries. From then until 1871, the shah acted as both sovereign and prime minister.¹⁹ This experiment with Western-style reforms gathered pace from November 1871 with the appointment of Mirza Hoseyn Khan Moshir al-Dowle (1828–81) as prime minister. This reformer, who had served as a diplomat for over 20 years, including 12 as ambassador in Istanbul (1858–70), introduced a series of administrative, military and judicial reforms based on the Ottoman *Tanzimat*.²⁰ As an enthusiastic supporter of modernity, he persuaded the shah to grant in July 1872 a vast mining, forestry and industrial concession to a British subject, Baron Julius de Reuter.²¹ About a year after the granting of the concession, which displeased both the Russians and the conservatives in Persia, Moshir al-Dowle arranged his sovereign's first trip to Europe (May–September 1873).²² This first-hand experience of the outside

13. Adamiyat, 1969.

14. Khurmuji, 1965, pp. 103–5; Amanat, 1991, pp. 577–99.

15. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 546–51.

16. Amanat, 1997, pp. 204–18.

17. MacEoin, 1983, pp. 219–55; Cole, 1989, pp. 422–9.

18. Amanat, 1993, pp. 1003–4.

19. The first ministries established were for domestic affairs, foreign affairs, war, finance, justice and *owqāf* (ministry in charge of religious endowments). Later a few other ministries (court, education and trade) were added. See E'temad al-Saltane, 1988, Vol. 3, pp. 1809–10, 1935–6.

20. Adamiyat, 1972.

21. Mahmud, 1983, Vol. 3, pp. 1008–18; Curzon, 1892, Vol. 1, pp. 480–1.

22. Naser al-Din Shah, 1874.

world helped the shah to gain a better understanding of the true state of his country. Nevertheless, his favourite Anis al-Dowle (1842–97), who on Moshir al-Dowle's advice had not been allowed to accompany the shah, vented her anger by fomenting a plot at the court during his absence. On his return, the shah, confronted with a palace revolt orchestrated by the *'ulamā'* and, from behind the scenes, by the Russian legation in Tehran, was forced to dismiss his prime minister and cancel Reuter's concession (December 1873).²³

The prime ministers who succeeded Moshir al-Dowle until the end of Naser al-Din Shah's reign were more intent on holding on to their posts than on carrying out reforms. Nevertheless, during those 23 years, a number of changes were made in the legal and taxation systems which aroused increasing opposition from the *'ulamā'*.²⁴ Moshir al-Dowle, who from 1874 served as both minister of foreign affairs and minister of war, continued until his dismissal in 1880 to implement certain reforms. In the military field, on the occasion of the shah's second trip to Europe (May–July 1878), he encouraged his sovereign to sign an agreement with Russia for the creation of a Cossack brigade in Persia.²⁵ And so, in 1879, a few Russian officers led by Colonel Domantovitch arrived in Tehran and founded the Cossack brigade, which later became a division and was to play an important role in Persia at the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁶

From the economic point of view, in his efforts to bring greater prosperity to his country, Naser al-Din Shah embarked on a policy of granting concessions to foreign powers.²⁷ But the cancelling of two such concessions, granted during his third trip to Europe in May–September 1889,²⁸ caused serious political and economic problems for the Persian Government: the first concession, brokered by Mirza Malkam Khan Nazem al-Dowle (1833–1908), the Persian minister in London (1873–89), authorized the creation of a national lottery and the building of casinos in the country. After the shah's return to Tehran, this privilege was abolished for religious reasons and Malkam Khan, who opposed the decision, was dismissed from his diplomatic post in December 1889. The shah's decision owed much to the intrigues of Mirza 'Ali Asqar Khan Amin al-Sultan (1858–1907), prime minister from 1886 to 1896. Partly out of revenge, Malkam Khan, now on the side of reform in opposition to the court, launched a London-based newspaper called *Qānūn* [The Law], which

23. Rawlinson, 1875, pp. 135–8; Amanat, 1993, pp. 1003–5.

24. Algar, 1969, p. 179.

25. Naser al-Din Shah, 1879; Kazemzadeh, 1956, Vol. 15, pp. 351–63; Curzon, 1892, Vol. 1, pp. 594–8.

26. Lambton, 1978, pp. 395–6.

27. Teymuri, 2002.

28. Naser al-Din Shah, n.d. [1891].

was smuggled into Iran. In this journal, of which a few issues were published in collaboration with Sayyed Jamal al-Din Asadabadi, known as Afghani (1838–97), a religious intellectual inspired by Pan-Islamist ideas,²⁹ Malkam Khan criticized the absolute power of the shah and the corruption of his entourage.³⁰

The second concession was the Tobacco Régie, granted in March 1890 to Major Gerald Talbot. In exchange for an annual payment of £15,000, this British subject was given a 50-year monopoly over the purchase, sale and export of Persian tobacco. Discontented Persian traders organized demonstrations against the monopoly. They were orchestrated by certain influential *‘ulamā’*, who even called for a general boycott of everything connected with the production or use of tobacco. This tactic, backed by the Russian legation in Tehran, eventually forced the shah, in April 1892, to cancel the concession against damages of £500,000, which the Persian Government paid over to Talbot in instalments.³¹

The Tobacco movement revealed a lack of balance in the government's domestic policy and signalled a dramatic turning-point in popular dissatisfaction against the country's monarchical system.³² It also highlighted the importance of the role of the *‘ulamā’*, who were able in these circumstances to take the lead in opposing the court. The scale of this revolt suggests that the assassination of the shah a few years later (1 May 1896), on the eve of his jubilee according to the lunar calendar, was not an isolated and unforeseeable event. The assassin, Mirza Reza Kermani, a 49-year-old cleric and supporter of Sayyed Jamal al-Din Afghani, had been imprisoned and tortured, partly for his involvement in the demonstrations against the Tobacco Régie.³³

The assassination of Naser al-Din Shah put an end to a long reign that covered a decisive period in the political, economic, social and cultural contemporary history of Iran. Under the shah, the modernization process had gathered momentum: the Polytechnic (*Dār al-Fonūn*), the Royal Museum, the postal services, the press, the printing industry, gas lighting, photography and numerous other novelties made a deep impression on traditional Iranian society, which increasingly opened itself to the West during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah.³⁴ Many of these European innovations were introduced by the shah himself, who was passionately interested in art and archaeology. His numerous journals of his travels in Persia and abroad show him to have been a very attentive observer,

29. Keddie, 1972; Pakdaman, 1969.

30. Algar, 1973; Ra'in, 1971. For an example of *Qānūn* in facsimile, see Malkam Khan, 1976.

31. Feuvrier, 1906, pp. 269–310; Adamiyat, 1981; Keddie, 1966; Lambton, 1965.

32. Amanat, 1993, pp. 1004–5.

33. Zahir al-Dowle, 1983.

34. Mahbubi Ardakani, 1978.

but his distrust of others and his egotism, his capricious and sometimes cruel treatment of his subjects and his intolerance of dissident opinion seriously tarnished his image. His love of hunting and travelling, which led him to spend much of his life in the plains and mountains surrounding the capital, and his taste for ceremony, together with certain disreputable aspects of his self-indulgent lifestyle, have left a distorted and often grotesque image of him.³⁵

In the foreign policy arena, during the shah's long reign, the country was increasingly encircled by Russia and Britain, exercising both military and diplomatic pressure. In the face of that threat, the shah deployed considerable diplomatic skills – for which he is not always given due credit – and succeeded in keeping the country's sovereignty and to some extent borders intact, though at the cost of somewhat tenuous border arrangements as some parts of Iranian territory (Khiva, Merv, Old Sarakhs, Herat, eastern Sistan, etc.) had to be given up, as we shall see below.

The dispute with Britain over Herat

As soon as Naser al-Din became shah in 1848, Amir Kabir established good relations with Zahir al-Dowle, governor of Herat, who had not backed Salar's uprising in Khurasan. After the death of Zahir al-Dowle in June 1851, he was succeeded by his son Sa'id Mohammad Khan and relations were further strengthened by diplomatic gifts and the bestowal of the title Zahir al-Dowle on the son.³⁶ The friendly relations between the Persian court and the governor of Herat constituted an advantage of which the shah and his entourage were fully conscious. But the British, anxious about their interests in India, did not look kindly on any understanding between Tehran and Herat. Consequently, in January 1853, taking advantage of the position of the pro-British prime minister Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, Britain concluded a treaty with the shah concerning a possible military presence of the Qajars in Herat. Under this agreement, Naser al-Din Shah undertook to send troops to Herat only in the event of a military threat, but his troops would not have the right to enter the city during their operations or to stay there once the city had been relieved.³⁷

In September 1855, after an uprising by the inhabitants of Herat, the governor Sa'id Mohammad Khan was replaced by Mohammad Yusef Khan Sadozai, who, by demonstrating his loyalty to the shah, was recognized as the legitimate ruler and established friendly relations with the Persian court.³⁸ As a result, the Persian Government dispatched reinforcements to help him defend the city when Dost Mohammad Khan, governor of Kabul, after seizing

35. Amanat, 1993, pp. 1003–4; Mo'ayyer al-Mamalek, 1993; E'temad al-Saltane, 1977.

36. Riyazi Heravi, 1990, pp. 51–2; Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, p. 535.

37. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. 77–8; Mahmud, 1983, Vol. 2, pp. 649–51.

38. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 607–9, 665–8; Riyazi Heravi, 1990, pp. 54–7.

Kandahar in November 1855, was encouraged by the British to attack Herat in 1856.³⁹ The Persian forces, initially given a warm welcome by the inhabitants of Herat, were soon forced to evacuate the city owing to the treachery of Mohammad Yusef Khan, who joined the plot of Dost Mohammad Khan and his British allies.⁴⁰ Irritated by this turn of events, Naser al-Din Shah ordered Sultan Morad Mirza (known as Hosam al-Saltane after his victory over Salar) to attack Herat himself. In this way the shah pursued the old Qajar ambition of re-establishing Persian sovereignty over the long-disputed vassal state of Herat.⁴¹

The city was therefore once again besieged by the Qajar forces who, after several months of fighting and various difficulties, conquered it in October 1856.⁴² But when the British declared war on 1 November 1856, landed Anglo-Indian soldiers on the island of Khark (4 December), took Bushir (Bushehr) (10 December) and advanced into Khuzestan (January–March 1857), the shah was obliged not only to withdraw his troops from Herat but also to relinquish his claim to control the government of that city.⁴³ Negotiations took place in Paris between the representative of the Persian Government Farrokh Khan Ghaffari Amin al-Molk (later nicknamed Amin al-Dowle) and Lord Cowley, the British ambassador in France. Through French mediation, an Anglo-Persian treaty was signed in Paris on 4 March 1857.⁴⁴ This document confirmed the severance of Herat from Persian territory and indirectly recognized the independence of Afghanistan.

The defeat of Merv by the Turkmen

After crushing the uprising of Salar in Khurasan, Hosam al-Saltane, governor of that region, acting on the orders of Amir Kabir, engaged, from July 1851, a series of battles against the Turkmen of Sarakhs, who had assisted Salar.⁴⁵ These skirmishes lasted several months mainly because the khan of Khwarazm, Mohammad Amin Khwarazm-Shah, was discreetly helping the Turkmen. The khan was in fact playing a double game: although he had sent an envoy to Tehran in order to preserve friendly relations with the Persian Government, he was at the same time aiding the Turkmen against the governor of Khurasan.⁴⁶ The mission of Mirza Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat (1800–71), a representative of Amir Kabir sent to Khwarazm in the summer of 1851, did not change matters

39. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 625–7.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 669–70.

41. Amanat, 1993, p. 1003–4.

42. Riyazi Heravi, 1990, pp. 62–3; Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 672–99.

43. Calmard, 1987, pp. 65–8; Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 719–42, 757–63; Hunt, 1858.

44. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. 81–5; Mahmud, 1983, Vol. 2, pp. 694–700.

45. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 480–3.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 469–71.

because he failed to persuade the khan to refrain from supporting the Turkmens and to release several hundred Persian prisoners.⁴⁷ In 1853 the Turkmens of Sarakhs and Merv, fearing the ambitions of the khan of Khwarazm, allied themselves with the governor of Khurasan. This coalition was respected even after the replacement, in April 1854, of Hosam al-Saltane by his elder brother Fereydun Mirza Farmanfarma (?–1854), who was forced to confront the Khwarazm-Shah in March 1855 at Sarakhs. Here the khan was unexpectedly defeated, captured and immediately put to death.⁴⁸ This victory reassured the Turkmens, who soon resumed their attacks on the city of Mashhad.

In the summer of 1858 Sultan Hamze Mirza Heshmat al-Dowle (?–1880), brother of Hosam al-Saltane, was appointed governor of Khurasan. Despite the building of a fortress at Sarakhs, which was eventually completed in November 1859, he failed to subdue the Turkmens. To halt their incursions, which were keeping the region of Khurasan in a state of permanent turmoil, the Persian Government invested heavily in a military campaign. After a few initial successes against the Turkmens,⁴⁹ however, the unexpected defeat of the Persian troops at Merv in November 1860 plunged the court into despair.⁵⁰ Heshmat al-Dowle was immediately replaced by his brother Hosam al-Saltane, who managed to defend Khurasan against the ever more vigorous attacks of the Turkmens. In the summer of 1867, seven years after the defeat at Merv, Naser al-Din Shah travelled to Khurasan for the first time and stayed there three months.⁵¹ The royal presence did not prevent the Turkmens from pursuing their attacks which, together with the bitter memory of the disastrous collapse of the expedition to Merv in 1860, persuaded the shah to accept a diplomatic compromise with Russia for the sake of security in the region.

Demarcation of the north-east frontiers

The defeat of the Russians in the Crimean war (1854–6) by an alliance of British, French and Turkish forces changed the direction of Russian expansion, which was pursued henceforth in Central Asia. After taking Tashkent in 1865, the Russians established a protectorate over Bukhara (1868), whose khan handed over the city of Samarkand to the tsar and in addition paid a war indemnity.⁵² In 1869 the main Russian naval base in the south-east of the Caspian Sea was established at Krasnovodsk, where fortifications were

47. Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 471–8; Hedayat, 1977.

48. E'temad al-Saltane, 1885, Vol. 2, pp. 369–70; Hedayat, 1960, Vol. 10, pp. 583–7.

49. A brief report on these initial victories and a plan of the battle were published on 13 Sept. 1860 in No. 473 of *Ruznāme-ye Dowlat-e 'Alliye-ye Irān*.

50. A report on this expedition and its defeat was sent to Naser al-Din Shah. This document has been published in two versions. See Shahidi, 1971, pp. 35–64; Lashkarnevis, 1977, pp. 75–144.

51. Naser al-Din Shah, 1869.

52. Mahmud, 1983, Vol. 3, pp. 840–54; Rawlinson, 1875; Vámbéry, 1873.

constructed. When questioned by the Persian court, the Russian legation in Tehran officially confirmed that Russia recognized Persian sovereignty over the entire length of the Atrek river and had no intention of setting up military bases there.⁵³ This temporary reassurance became, a few years later, the basis of a Russo-Persian agreement that fixed the boundaries between the two countries east of the Caspian Sea.

Pursuing their policy of territorial expansion in Central Asia, the Russians, after seizing Khiva (1873) and Kokand (1876), in 1881 broke through the resistance of the Turkmens, who had been battling with the tsar's forces for several years.⁵⁴ When the fortress of Geok-tepe ('Blue Hill'), last bastion of the Turkmens, fell into the hands of the Russians, the latter imposed the 'Akhal-Khurasan' convention on the Persian Government.

Under the first article of that convention, the Atrek river from its mouth in the Gulf of Hoseyn Qoli in the Caspian Sea up to the village of Chat was to serve as the frontier between the two countries. The same article went on to define with precision, stage by stage and village by village, the new Russo-Persian frontier from Chat as far as the mountains of Zir Kuh. The second article stipulated that a joint boundary commission would shortly be sent to the area to mark out the main features along the new frontier. The other seven articles covered: the commitment of the Persian Government to evacuate all forts on the other side of the new frontier (Article 3); the undertaking by Persia in regard to the head-waters of the Firuze river and the villages and cultivated land along that river (Article 4); the undertaking by both parties to build roads between Khurasan and the Transcaspian with the aim of developing trade between the two regions (Article 5); a bilateral agreement not to arm the Turkmens of Astarabad and Khurasan (Article 6); the right of Russia to appoint Russian agents in the Persian frontier towns to keep watch on the implementation of the clauses of the convention (Article 7); the confirmation of all previous treaties signed between the two countries (Article 8); and a bilateral commitment to ratify the convention in the near future (Article 9).⁵⁵

On 21 December 1881 the convention was signed by Mirza Sa'id Khan Mo'tamen al-Molk (1816–84), Persian minister for foreign affairs, and Ivan Zinoviev, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of Russia in Tehran. On the same day the two men signed another document entitled 'independent and secret articles'. This document added five separate secret clauses to the convention specifying the Russo-Persian boundaries from the mountains of Zir Kuh to Sarakhs and giving the Russian Government what amounted to

53. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, p. liv.

54. Marvin, 1883, p. 136; Siassi, 1931, pp. 83–5.

55. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. lxxi–lxxv; Kavusi (ed.), 1993, pp. 183–93.

a free hand concerning the Turkmens of Merv and the people living henceforth on Russian soil east of the Tejen river (Hari Rud).⁵⁶

The 'Akhal-Khurasan' convention and its 'secret' additional clauses were officially ratified and exchanged in March 1882. In July 1883 Naser al-Din Shah visited Khurasan for the second and last time.⁵⁷ This trip enabled him to examine the local situation, particularly in regard to the Turkmen attacks after the Russians had taken control. In October 1883 the joint boundary commission, provided for by the convention, visited the area.⁵⁸ In March–April 1884, before the commission had finished its work, the Russians seized Merv and Old Sarakhs (Sarakhs-e Kohne), a city located east of the Tejen river.⁵⁹ From now on, Russia had a boundary with Persia both east and west of the Caspian Sea and became an even greater threat to British interests in India.

Under the 1881 convention, the frontier from Chat to Sarakhs greatly disadvantaged the Persians because all the fertile land, water springs and pasture lay on the other side of the border, which had been imposed on the Qajar government. According to the memoirs of Arfa' al-Dowle (1846–1937), translator and one of the Persians on the boundary commission, Naser al-Din Shah had taken an interest in the work of the commission.⁶⁰ Arfa' al-Dowle also explained how he had succeeded in convincing the Russian delegation to allow the inhabitants of Lotfabad, a village east of Kalat, to keep their pastureland which, according to the Russian map, should have been annexed to Russian territory. He added that this service to his country had been rewarded by the title of adjutant-general, a privilege accorded by the shah, who had himself examined the new map drawn up by the commission. Certain court notables then accused Arfa' al-Dowle of having betrayed his country by ceding to Russia some fertile land around the Gulf of Hoseyn Qoli in order to obtain the pastureland of Lotfabad.⁶¹

Twelve years after the signing of the 'Akhal-Khurasan' convention, under a protocol signed in May 1893 between the Russian and Persian governments, the village of Firuze, which the first article of that convention had recognized as Persian territory, was annexed by Russia. In exchange, the tsar offered the shah the village of Hisar, situated to the east of the Caspian Sea, and some pieces of land on the banks of the Arax which had been occupied by Russia since the treaty of Turkaman Chay in 1828.⁶²

56. Kavusi (ed.), 1993, pp. 194–203.

57. Naser al-Din Shah, 1885.

58. E'temad al-Saltane, 1885, Vol. 2, p. 382; Qaziha (ed.), 2001, pp. 222–4.

59. Planhol, 1990, p. 405; Curzon, 1892, Vol. 1, pp. 197–8.

60. Arfa' al-Dowle, 1999, pp. 158–9.

61. Ibid., pp. 104–60; Mokhber al-Saltane, 1965, pp. 380–1.

62. Kavusi (ed.), 1993, pp. 319–21.

Delimitation of the eastern boundaries

In reaction to Russia's spectacular advance in Central Asia, the British Government, anxious to protect its interests in India, strengthened its presence in Baluchistan and Sistan by imposing the partition of those regions.⁶³ In Baluchistan, a province in the south-east of Iran, there had for some years been ongoing territorial disputes between the Persian Government and the British-protected khanates of Kalat. After the signing of an Anglo-Persian agreement in April 1868 concerning the laying of a telegraph line in the south-east of Persia in order to link India with Europe via Baluchistan and the Persian Gulf, British telegraph agents settled in the region.⁶⁴ A little later the British Government, ostensibly for the security of its agents but in reality to protect its interests in India, obliged the Persian court to accept a joint commission to draw up the boundaries. This commission, chaired by Major-General Sir Frederic John Goldsmid (1818–1908), director-general of the Indo-European Telegraph Company in London, visited the region in 1871 and drew an arbitrary boundary going from Gouator on the Persian Gulf to Kuhak in the heart of Baluchistan.⁶⁵ This arbitration was approved by Naser al-Din Shah in September 1871. The Qajar forces then occupied the strategic area of Kuhak, which the Goldsmid arrangements had not regarded as Persian territory.⁶⁶ This occupation was disputed for over 20 years by the British who, after setting up a sort of protectorate over Afghanistan in 1879, seized Kalat. In March 1896 another arbitration commission, chaired by Colonel Thomas Holdich, at last completed the tracing of the borders in Baluchistan by prolonging the Kuhak line as far as the mountains of Malek Siyah in Sistan. Baluchistan was thus divided in two, with a western part for Persia and an eastern one for the British which was henceforth called 'British Baluchistan'.⁶⁷

As for Sistan, which was claimed by both Persia and Afghanistan, the Goldsmid arbitration divided the region between the two countries in August 1872: Sistan itself, including Neyzar to the north, as far as the mountains of Malek Siyah west of the Helmand river, was attributed to Persia and the other part, made up of territories east of the line, to Afghanistan.⁶⁸ Some time after this arbitration, the occupation of Hashtadan by Persian forces provoked new disputes between Persia and Afghanistan. This fertile plain, about 100 km west

63. Greaves, 1986.

64. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. 183–4.

65. Wright, 2003, p. 76; Goldsmid (ed.), 1876.

66. According to Aitchison, Kuhak was occupied by Persian forces in May 1874, but certain researchers believe that when the shah approved the Goldsmid arbitration in September 1871 he already knew about the occupation of Kuhak. See Aitchison (ed.), 1933, p. 15; Salar Behzadi, 1993, pp. 135–7.

67. Holdich, 1897; Mojtahed-Zadeh, 1994, p. 132; Siassi, 1931, pp. 88–9.

68. Goldsmid (ed.), 1876, Vol. 1, pp. 408–14; Siassi, 1931, p. 90.

of Herat, contained 80 *qanāts* (underground irrigation channels) – hence the name Hashtadan (*hashtād* means 80 in Persian). The occupation of this plain was contested by Britain, which finally, in 1888, succeeded in persuading the Persian Government to accept the arbitration of a new boundary commission. This commission, chaired by Major-General C. S. MacLean, British consul for Khurasan and Sistan, divided Hashtadan between Persia and Afghanistan in November 1888. The demarcation of the new boundary was completed by MacLean in July 1891.⁶⁹

MOZAFFAR AL-DIN SHAH (1896–1907)

About a month after the assassination of Naser al-Din Shah, the crown prince Mozaffar al-Din Mirza (born in Tehran on 25 March 1853), who in keeping with Qajar tradition had been ruler of Azerbaijan since 1855, arrived in Tehran and mounted the throne on 8 June 1896 with no sign of opposition.⁷⁰ Shy, fearful, fickle, a keen hunter and a good marksman but also over-sentimental and superstitious and in fragile health, the fifth Qajar shah inherited at the age of 43 a kingdom beset by serious financial problems. That did not prevent him from travelling, like his father, to Europe three times (1900, 1902 and 1905) in search of medical treatment for his kidney disorder but also to satisfy his own curiosity about newly invented machines in the West. Disastrous loans contracted on two occasions from Russia and once from Britain were used by the court to cover the expenses of these expeditions. Mozaffar al-Din Shah, like his father, also resorted to the sale of trading concessions, the most important of which, a 60-year oil concession granted in May 1901 to a British subject called W. K. D'Arcy, would have major consequences for the political and economic situation in Persia in the following decades.⁷¹

Reforms in customs and excise, introduced by Belgian officials in the service of the shah since March 1898, increased the government's revenue.⁷² However, the new measures were unpopular since Persian traders found themselves obliged to pay more taxes than their foreign counterparts trading in the country. This irksome situation was aggravated in November 1901 by the concluding of a trade agreement with Russia that granted Russian merchants substantial customs privileges.⁷³ Complaints about this economic domination were voiced increasingly openly among the various social classes, stirred up by

69. Riyazi Heravi, 1990, pp. 193–4; Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. lxxix–lxxx, clxxvi–clxxxvii; Mojtahed-Zadeh, 1994, p. 134; Yate, 1900, pp. 132–3.

70. Sadiq al-Mamalek Sheybani, 1987, pp. 305–7, 314–15.

71. Ferrier, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 27–47.

72. Destrée, 1976.

73. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. lxxxii–lxxxv.

the *‘ulamā’*. Certain secret or semi-secret societies (*anjomans*), through their clandestine tracts (*shabnāmes*), also played a decisive role in denouncing the corruption and incompetence of the government in regard to the political and economic interference of foreign powers.⁷⁴ This prompted the development of the constitutional movement that began in April 1905 by calling for the expulsion of Joseph Naus, the Belgian director of customs, the dismissal of certain high-ranking Persian officials and the creation of a ‘House of Justice’ (*‘Edālat-Khāne*), and ended up in August 1906 by insisting on the promulgation of a constitution and the creation of a national Consultative Assembly (*Majles-e Shurāy-e Melli*).⁷⁵

On 9 September a hastily drawn-up electoral law was ratified by the shah. Elections began at once, and as soon as the elected representatives of Tehran (about 60 deputies out of 156 divided among 6 social categories)⁷⁶ had been designated, the first *Majles* was inaugurated by the shah on 7 October, even before the arrival of the deputies from the provinces. The reason for this hurry was the ill health of the shah: it was necessary to have a coherent – even if unfinished – text of the Fundamental Law (*Qānūn-e Asāsī*) signed by him and countersigned by his successor Mohammad ‘Ali Mirza, who was known to have little liking for a constitutional monarchy. The text of the Fundamental Law, which contained 51 articles affirming inter alia the principles of national representation, freedom of opinion and social justice, was ready by the end of October but the shah played for time and only signed it on 30 December, just a week before he died (8 January 1907).⁷⁷

Persia now had a constitution. The decisive role in this achievement was played by the *‘ulamā’*, intellectuals and tradesmen. (It was of little concern to the masses, who were content with performing their Islamic duties.) As for the neighbouring powers: Russia, whose defeat by Japan in 1904 and aborted revolution in 1905 had an indirect impact on the constitutional revolution in Persia, did not approve of the constitutional monarchy in that country; Britain, on the other hand, welcomed a parliamentary regime in Persia that would be able to restrict the absolute power of a Russophile king. This explains why the British legation in Tehran is sometimes suspected of having influenced the Persian constitutionalists behind the scenes at the time of their gathering (*bast*) in the legation’s compound, where they camped in July–August 1906 in order to exert pressure on the shah.

74. Lambton, 1958, pp. 43–60.

75. Browne, 1966, pp. 111–23; Kasravi, 1970, pp. 48–126; Afary, 1996.

76. The 6 social categories were: princes and members of the Qajar tribe; *‘ulamā’*; nobles and notables; merchants; landowners and peasants; and the guilds of craftsmen.

77. Nazem al-Eslam, 1970, Vol. 3, pp. 38–45; Malekzade, 1984, II/Vol. 1, pp. 408–11.

Turning to the eastern regions of Persia during the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, the most important event in Sistan was the change in the course of the Helmand river in a way that favoured the Afghans. This provoked renewed conflict between Persia and Afghanistan from 1896. As required by the treaty of Paris (4 March 1857), the two countries asked the British Government to arbitrate. A joint commission, chaired by Colonel Arthur Henry McMahon (1862–1949), was designated in 1902 with the task of redrawing the Afghanistan–Persia boundary in the area where the Helmand had changed its course and arbitrating to ensure an equitable sharing of water from the river. The demarcation of the new boundaries, carried out in two stages, in November 1903 and in February 1905, was approved by both countries.⁷⁸ On the issue of the sharing of the water, the commission decided among other issues in April 1905, after extensive studies on the spot, to attribute two-thirds of the Helmand's discharge to Afghanistan and one third to Persia.⁷⁹ The Persian Government contested this arbitration and opted for the status quo.⁸⁰ The Helmand river, which was essential to the irrigation of Sistan, therefore remained for a few more years a thorn in the flesh of relations between Persia and Afghanistan.

In Baluchistan, as the March 1896 Holdich arbitration had not been followed up by a demarcation of the boundaries, the status of the region of Mirjaveh prompted a number of disputes in Anglo-Persian relations. In March 1905 the British Government, wanting the shah to look favourably on the arbitration of McMahon in regard to the Helmand river, officially recognized that Mirjaveh belonged to Persia.⁸¹

MOHAMMAD 'ALI SHAH (1907–9)

Mohammad 'Ali Shah, the sixth Qajar king, succeeded to the throne on 8 January 1907. He was then 35 years old (born in Tabriz on 21 June 1872) and bitterly opposed to any reduction in the powers of the monarchy. During his short reign, his sole concern was to put an end to the constitution by any means. Some of the *'ulamā'*, troubled by the progressive opinions of a few radical deputies, shared the views of the shah or at least preferred a religious constitution (*mashrute-ye mashru'e*).⁸² This caused a fatal split in the ranks of the constitutionalists, who were then subjected to increasingly frequent attacks by the shah and his court. Mohammad 'Ali Shah, despite the fact that he had

78. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. 278–82; Mojtahed-Zadeh, 1994, p. 135.

79. McMahon, 1906; Tate, 1909; Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. 283–6.

80. Mahmud, 1983, Vol. 7, pp. 299–304; Zand, 1976, pp. 39–40.

81. Mojtahed-Zadeh, 1994, p. 133.

82. Adamiyat, 1976, pp. 259–67; Ha'eri, 1981, pp. 277–81.

countersigned the Fundamental Law on 30 December 1906 and promulgated its Fundamental Supplementary Laws on 7 October 1907, and had sworn on several occasions to respect the constitution faithfully, finally gave orders to the Cossack brigade to bombard the *Majles* (23 June 1908).⁸³ On 27 June he dissolved the *Majles* and abolished the constitution as contrary to the *shari'a*. The next 13 months up until the conquest of Tehran by the constitutionalists are generally known as 'the minor tyranny' (*estebdād-e saqir*) to indicate the short duration of the return to absolute rule. Some former deputies were arrested and executed, a few were saved by the intervention of the foreign legations in Tehran, but many others changed sides.⁸⁴

In such a situation, with no hope of restoring the constitution, the constitutionalists of Tabriz again took up the cause. In spite of strong opposition from the Russians, who occupied the city militarily in April 1909, the Azerbaijanis, accompanied by the troops of Bakhtiari from Isfahan and an army from Rasht, took Tehran on 16 July 1909. The shah, who had found refuge at the Russian legation, abdicated in favour of his eldest son Ahmad Mirza and, after obtaining the right to an annual pension, left Tehran for Russia with the rest of his family in September 1909. In July 1911 his vain attempt to recover his throne cost him his pension. He died in exile in San Remo on 5 April 1925.⁸⁵

In matters of foreign policy, the most important event of Mohammad 'Ali Shah's reign was the Anglo-Russian convention of 31 August 1907, which provided inter alia for the division of Persia into two spheres of influence – Russian in the north and British in the south – separated by a neutral buffer zone in the centre.⁸⁶ This convention, vigorously denounced by Persia, was in fact a result of the warmer relations between Russia and Britain brokered by France to counter German militarism.

From the economic point of view, a highly significant event during the short reign of Mohammad 'Ali Shah (and one which completely escaped the attention of the Persian court, at the time absorbed by the question of the constitution) was the striking of oil at Masjed on 26 May 1908 by G. B. Reynolds, a British geologist who had been working in Persia on behalf of W. K. D'Arcy since September 1901.⁸⁷ This discovery opened a new chapter in the political and economic history of Iran, offering fresh prospects for the country and soon exciting the interest of the Western powers in the Middle East.

83. Nazem al-Eslam, 1970, Vol. 3, pp. 156–60.

84. Digard, Hourcade and Richard, 1996, pp. 40–1; Kasravi, 1970, pp. 647–57.

85. Burrell, 1993, p. 432; Amir-Khizi, 1960.

86. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. 119–21, 125–6.

87. Ferrier, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 48–102.

AHMAD SHAH (1909–25)

On 16 July 1909, following the abdication of Mohammad 'Ali Shah, Crown Prince Ahmad Mirza, then 11 years old (born on 28 January 1898), became shah. Initially, the chief of the Qajar tribe, 'Azad al-Molk (1823–1910), served as regent; he was followed by the pro-British Naser al-Molk (1856–1927) until Ahmad Shah came of age and was crowned on 21 July 1914. The five years from 1909 to 1914 saw a succession of more than ten short-lived governments. The second *Majles*, inaugurated on 15 November 1909, soon found itself faced with an ultimatum from Russia which demanded the ousting of Morgan Shuster (1877–1960), an American expert employed from May 1911 by the Persian Government to reform the public finances.⁸⁸ Despite Shuster's dismissal in December 1911, Russian forces gradually took up positions on Persian soil in Azerbaijan as far as Khurasan, where, in March 1912, they bombarded the mausoleum of Imam Reza and killed a number of people opposed to the return of the former shah, Mohammad 'Ali Mirza.⁸⁹

On 3 August 1914, two weeks after the coronation of the young shah, the First World War broke out. Although neutral, Persia became a battlefield for Turkish, Russian and British forces. Between 1915 and 1917, at a time when one short-lived government followed another in Tehran, certain nationalist, religious and pro-German elites formed a government-in-exile at Kermanshah in the west of the country and fought in vain against the Russians and the British.⁹⁰ Another patriotic movement, organized from 1915 in Gilan in the north by Mirza Kuchak Khan Jangali (1878–1921), called for the freeing of the country from Russian and British interference.⁹¹ In 1915 those two powers signed an agreement dividing Persia into two spheres of influence: the north for Russia and the south for Britain.⁹² In 1916 Britain, seeking to protect its interests from German scheming, created the 'South Persia Rifles' (SPR), an Indo-Persian army led by British officers. Another army called the 'East Persia Cordon', with its headquarters in Mashhad, controlled all the eastern regions of Persia. After the 1917 October revolution, when the Bolsheviks decided to withdraw from Persian territory, Britain created the 'Norperforce' to take the place of the tsar's army.⁹³

Persia came out of the First World War weaker and beset by administrative and financial chaos. It was even unable to make its voice heard at the Versailles Peace Conference in January 1919 because of the refusal of the French and

88. Shuster, 1912; McDaniel, 1974.

89. Uliya' Bafqi, 1979, pp. 51–63; Sykes, 1958, Vol. 2, pp. 426–7.

90. Sykes, 1958, Vol. 2, pp. 442–68.

91. Fakhra'i, 1964; Ravasani, 1973.

92. Moberly, 1987, pp. 53–137.

93. Luft, 2002, pp. 45–79; Sykes, 1958, Vol. 2, pp. 454–5, 476–80; Nasiri-Moghaddam, 1995.

British governments who, as victors, had agreed between themselves to redraw the boundaries and redefine their spheres of influence throughout the Middle East. They would not allow the Persian delegation to participate in the conference since they considered that Persia, in spite of its neutrality, had always favoured the Germans during the war. The limitations of this Franco-British solidarity emerged on 9 August 1919, when a treaty was signed between Vosuq al-Dowle (1872–1951), the Persian prime minister, and Percy Cox (1864–1937), a British diplomat temporarily in charge of the British legation in Tehran. This document, while recognizing the independence and integrity of Persia with a view to facilitating the reconstruction of the country, placed its army and finances under the control of British advisers and was opposed by France, the United States and Persian nationalists. It was not therefore ratified, either by the *Majles* or by the shah. Indeed the shah, who was due to leave for his first trip to Europe a few days after the signing of the treaty, never alluded to it during his stay in London.⁹⁴

As soon as the shah returned to Tehran (June 1920), where he was given a hero's welcome by the people, he replaced Vosuq al-Dowle with a well-known nationalist, Moshir al-Dowle Pirniya (1871–1935). At the time, Persia was going through a difficult period: in the north, after the landing of the Red Army at Anzali (near Rasht) in May 1920, the Jangal movement led by Mirza Kuchak Khan, which the Bolsheviks had been supporting for some time, had proclaimed a Soviet Socialist Republic (June 1920).⁹⁵ In Azerbaijan the democrats, led by Khiyabani (1879–1920), had taken to calling their region Azadestan ('Land of Freedom') since April 1920 and were demanding independence. In September 1920 this revolt was crushed and its leader killed.⁹⁶ As for the Jangalis, they continued to resist the state forces despite the split in their camp provoked by the far from unanimous declaration of a republic.

In order to persuade the Bolsheviks to stop supporting the Jangal movement, a delegation headed by Moshaver al-Mamalek Ansari (1868–1940) was sent to Moscow in October 1920. The negotiations led to the signing of a treaty of friendship on 26 February 1921. In this document, which was to form the basis of Irano-Soviet relations throughout the twentieth century, the Bolsheviks abandoned the imperialist policy of the former tsarist regime. The treaty, which contained 25 articles, accorded a number of political and economic advantages to Persia and fixed the boundary east of the Caspian Sea on the basis of the 'Akhal-Khurasan' convention of 1881 with a few minor

94. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. 138–43; Olson, 1984, pp. 214–49.

95. Yaqikiyan, 1984, pp. 75–99; Chaqueri, 1995, pp. 188–202.

96. Kasravi, 1976, pp. 865–96; Cottam, 1979, pp. 122–4.

adjustments, especially with respect to the village of Firuze, which the Soviet authorities handed back to Persia.⁹⁷

Five days before the treaty was signed, that is, on 21 February 1921, a *coup d'état* took place in Tehran. It was led by a pro-British journalist, Sayyed Zia' al-Din Tabataba'i (1889–1969), and a Cossack soldier named Reza Khan (1878–1944). Both had been in contact with General Edmund Ironside (1880–1959), commander of the 'Norperforce' in Persia.⁹⁸ Recent studies confirm the military and diplomatic involvement of the British but not the backing of the British Government for this coup, which was intended to take over the government without overthrowing the monarchy.⁹⁹ Sayyed Zia' and Reza Khan were thus appointed prime minister and commander-in-chief (*sardār sepah*) of the army respectively by Ahmad Shah. The new government denounced the Anglo-Persian treaty of 1919 and promised a series of reforms in agriculture, education, social affairs and health. However, the summary arrest of some 50 leading politicians using methods disapproved of by the court, and the quarrels with Reza Khan regarding the army, provoked a reaction that obliged Sayyed Zia' to resign and go into exile in Switzerland (24 May 1921).¹⁰⁰

Unlike Sayyed Zia', whose tenure of office was very short, Reza Khan rose step by step and by May 1921 he had become minister of war. He restored the integrity of Persian territory by severely repressing uprisings in all parts of the country: in Khurasan, the short-lived revolt (July–September 1921) of the local gendarmes, led by Colonel Pesyan (1892–1921); in Gilan, the Jangal movement, whose leader Mirza Kuchak Khan was killed in December 1921 in circumstances suggestive of treachery and plotting; in Azerbaijan, the unsuccessful coup by Major Lahuti (1877–1957), a gendarme officer of Kurdish origin, who fled to Moscow in February 1922; and in Kurdistan, the uprising led by Simko (1882–1930), who was exiled in July 1922.¹⁰¹

As minister of war, Reza Khan's authority increased, especially after the departure of the Russian and British forces between May and September 1921. In October 1923 Ahmad Shah reluctantly appointed Reza Khan prime minister before himself leaving for Europe for health reasons. The new prime minister, inspired by the republican regime recently proclaimed in Turkey (October 1923), contemplated establishing a republic in Persia. But he bowed to the *'ulamā'*, who were worried that, like their counterparts in Turkey, they might be deprived of the *owqāf* (from *waqf*, religious endowment) and forced to

97. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. lxxxvi–xcviii.

98. Ironside, 1972.

99. Zirinsky, 1992, pp. 639–63.

100. Ghani, 1998, pp. 199–223.

101. Cottam, 1979, pp. 70, 102–10, 123–4; Cronin, 1997, pp. 95–107.

accept the possibly sacrilegious policies of a secular republican ideology.¹⁰² During a visit to Qum by Reza Khan in March 1925, the ayatollahs (title given to the great Shi'ite religious leaders) therefore let it be known that the way was open for him to change the dynasty and become shah. The overthrow of Khaz'al (1861–1936), a British protégé, in Khuzistan in April 1925 brought Reza Khan another step closer to the throne.¹⁰³ Finally, on 31 October 1925, the *Majles* deposed Ahmad Shah, who was still in Europe, and put an end to the Qajar dynasty, soon to be replaced by that of the Pahlavis. Ahmad Shah, who never returned to Persia, died in France in 1930.¹⁰⁴

The Pahlavi dynasty (1925–79)

REZA SHAH (1925–41)

Proclaimed king by a Constituent Assembly on 12 December 1925, Reza Shah, founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, was sworn in before the *Majles* on 15 December 1925 and ascended the throne in the Golestan Palace the next day. He was crowned on 25 April 1926 at the age of 48, having been born on 16 March 1878 at Alasht in the Savad Kuh of Mazandaran. The name of the dynasty refers to the language of the Sasanians (A.D. 224–651) and was supposed to recall the glory of pre-Islamic Iran; it comes from the family name that Reza Shah had chosen shortly beforehand, when the law of 4 June 1925 instituting the civil register in Persia required each person to choose a family name.¹⁰⁵

Surrounded by reformers such as Davar (1887–1937), Teymurtash (1879–1933), Tadayyon (1881–1951) and others, Reza Shah launched a far-reaching programme of modernization and administrative centralization, with the more long-term aim of Westernizing the country. In military matters, a unified standing national army was created and a third of the annual budget devoted to it. The country's economic policy under Reza Shah was based on state intervention and oil revenues. The shah therefore unilaterally cancelled the concession granted to D'Arcy (26 November 1932) and, after a year of negotiations following the intervention of the League of Nations in April 1933, reached an agreement for a period of 60 years with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which later changed its name to Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).¹⁰⁶

102. Wilber, 1975, pp. 73–80; Ghani, 1998, pp. 289–324.

103. Ghani, 1998, pp. 325–50.

104. Sheikh-ol-Islami, 1985, pp. 657–60.

105. Hambly, 1995, pp. 511–14.

106. Stobaugh, 1978, pp. 201–6.

The construction of a modern road network and of the Trans-Persian Railway, which from 1938 linked the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, undoubtedly had a profound impact on the Iranian economy despite frequent criticism of its purpose and route.¹⁰⁷ State monopolies over certain products such as tea and sugar were introduced with a view to strengthening the economy. New industries such as sugar refining and the manufacture of cement and textiles, established in Tehran and in the provinces, also contributed to the country's economic independence. The state regained control over the customs and secured the revenue that had long been accorded to foreign powers in exchange for loans. Essential to economic expansion was the gradual modernization of the administration. The civil service was organized along Western lines and a modern secular judicial system was progressively introduced. Decisive steps in that direction were the promulgation of the penal code in 1926 and of the civil code in 1928 and the abrogation of the Capitulations on 10 May 1928 after exactly a century of existence.¹⁰⁸

In the field of culture, the education system was modernized: education was made compulsory for both genders in 1936, though exceptions existed especially in rural areas. The founding of the University of Tehran in 1934 also had a long-term impact on the cultural development of the country. Nationalism was strengthened by emphasizing and promoting the pre-Islamic aspects of Iranian culture and by almost systematically eliminating Arabic elements from the Persian language.¹⁰⁹ From March 1935, on the occasion of the Iranian New Year (*Nowruz*), the shah ordered all foreign embassies henceforth to use the term 'Iran' instead of 'Persia'. For Iranians, who had always called their country 'Iran', the change was meaningless but foreigners, brought up on memories of *A Thousand and One Nights*, found it absurd.¹¹⁰

There was an upheaval in the social structure too: army officers, civil servants, businessmen and suppliers gradually rose to the top of the social ladder, becoming richer and more influential than the former ruling classes, such as the landowners, '*ulamā*' and *bāzāris* (merchants) of the past. At the same time, the wearing of Western-style masculine dress, made compulsory from December 1928, and the prohibition of the veil for women from January 1936 affected the daily lives of the people, even though such changes were not to the taste of everyone, especially the '*ulamā*'. The most serious incident in this connection occurred in Mashhad in 1935, when a demonstration against obligatory European-style clothes for men, in particular the headgear known as the *kolāh Pahlavi*, and the

107. Bharier, 1971, p. 203.

108. Zirinsky, 2003, pp. 81–98.

109. Hambly, 1995, p. 513.

110. Digard, Hourcade and Richard, 1996, pp. 89–91.

impending unveiling of women, ended in a bloodbath in the Imam Reza mausoleum.¹¹¹

Reza Shah is often compared to Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), whom he met in 1934 on his official visit to Turkey, his only trip abroad. Unlike Atatürk, however, Reza Shah did not make lengthy political statements, nor did he write articles; he was a man of action who could not tolerate criticism. During his reign, political parties were practically abolished, criticism in the press was forbidden and the *Majles* lost its authority over the state. Reza Shah clearly failed in two areas – agriculture and relations with the tribes. In 1937 he tried in vain to improve the lot of the peasants by promulgating legislation aimed at forcing landowners to improve their methods of farming. As for the tribes, their forced sedentarization, sometimes in unsuitable regions, proved unsuccessful and aroused much bitterness.¹¹²

In foreign policy, Iran under Reza Shah established good relations with the neighbouring Islamic countries. This enabled him to resolve some boundary problems, particularly in the east. Afghanistan, independent since August 1919, had signed three treaties of friendship with Iran (June 1921, November 1927 and June 1928) and agreed to settle boundary disputes amicably.¹¹³ A joint commission, chaired by the Turkish General F. Altaï, thus delineated in May 1935 the final section of the frontier between Iran and Afghanistan, a distance of some 377 km between Hashtadan in the north and Yazdan in Sistan to the south which had not yet been demarcated.¹¹⁴ The regional Sa'dabad Pact, signed in 1937, further strengthened relations between Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and Iraq. However, the Iranian and Afghan governments did not manage to agree on the question of the Helmand. To ensure the equitable sharing of this river, a treaty and a declaration were signed on 29 December 1938 in Kabul but the documents were neither ratified nor exchanged since, despite the insistence of Iran, the National Consultative Assembly of Afghanistan did not approve the declaration as an official document appended to the treaty.¹¹⁵

Political relations with the Soviet Union were based on the 1921 treaty of friendship, and trade relations between the two countries were clarified by a series of short-term protocols (1927, 1931 and 1935). The Iranian Communist Party, supported by Moscow, constituted one of the stormy issues in the countries' bilateral relations. The promulgation of an anti-communist law by the *Majles* in June 1931 and the arrest of a group of 53 Iranian communists in 1937 greatly strained their relations.

111. Vahed, 1982.

112. Savory, 1978, pp. 42–3.

113. Aitchison (ed.), 1933, pp. xcix–cii, ccxii–ccxvii.

114. Mojtahed-Zadeh, 1994, pp. 135–6.

115. Zand, 1976, pp. 42–5.

Iran's international policy under Reza Shah was to seek a 'third power' that would act as a counterweight to British and Soviet pressure. To this end Iran developed closer relations with Germany, whose share in trade with Iran rose to 41 per cent in 1938–9.¹¹⁶ German companies supplied most of the heavy equipment and machines needed for Iran's industrial development programme and the plans for most new public or government buildings in Tehran were drawn up by German architects working for the Iranian Government.¹¹⁷ During the years prior to the Second World War, Reza Shah thus adopted a pro-German stance, which later gave the Soviet and British armed forces a pretext for transgressing Iran's neutrality and invading the country on 25 August 1941. On 16 September, less than a month later, Reza Shah, whose Trans-Persian Railway was to end up being used by the Allies, was forced to abdicate in favour of his eldest son and to go into exile, first in Mauritius and then in the South African Transvaal, where he died on 26 July 1944.¹¹⁸

MOHAMMAD REZA SHAH (1941–79)

On 17 September 1941, the day after the abdication of Reza Shah, the 22-year-old Crown Prince Mohammad Reza (born on 26 October 1919) was sworn in as the second shah of the Pahlavi dynasty. The young shah's rapid accession to the throne owed much to the prime minister, Mohammad 'Ali Forughi (1877–1942), who played a decisive role. The British and Soviet governments immediately recognized the new shah and in January 1942 signed a tripartite agreement with the Iranian Government in order to make their status as occupying powers official and legitimate. In so doing, while respecting the sovereignty of Iran, they promised among other things to withdraw from Iranian territory after the war.¹¹⁹

In March 1942 Forughi resigned for health reasons and was succeeded by 'Ali Soheyli (1895–1958), who, by declaring war on Germany in September 1943, engaged Iran on the side of the Allies. The evacuation of Iranian territory was also mentioned in the declaration signed on 1 December 1943 by Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt at the Tehran Conference. However, Iran, recognized at the time as the 'bridge to an Allied victory', was faced with serious problems after the war owing to the continued presence of the Red Army, which indirectly supported uprisings led by Ja'far Pishevari (1892–1947) in Azerbaijan and by Qazi Mohammad (1893–1947) and Mostafa Barzani (1903–79) in Kurdistan. The Tudeh Party, founded in September 1941 by the Iranian

116. Frye, 1968, p. 80.

117. Wilber, 1975, pp. 173–211.

118. Hambly, 1991, p. 242.

119. Savory, 1993, p. 446.

communists, who had benefited from an amnesty since the accession of the new shah, supported these uprisings, which led to the proclamation of a democratic republic in Tabriz (December 1945) and in Mahabad (January 1946).¹²⁰

Faced with the threat to Iran's territorial integrity, Ahmad Qavam (1873–1955), prime minister since January 1946, negotiated in person with Stalin in Moscow (February–March 1946). In April he signed with Sadchikov, the Russian ambassador in Tehran, a draft agreement which kindled hopes among the Russian authorities that the withdrawal of the Red Army would facilitate the award of an oil concession to the Soviet Union by the *Majles*. This diplomatic stratagem enabled the government, after the withdrawal of the Red Army in May 1946, to resolve the crises in Azerbaijan (December 1946) and Kurdistan (March 1947).¹²¹

In October 1947, a few months after these victories, the *Majles* cancelled the Qavam-Sadchikov agreement on the basis of a law passed in December 1944 which forbade the prime minister and other ministers from negotiating any oil concessions with foreigners. The law had been voted on the initiative of Mohammad Mosaddeq (1882–1967). This liberal politician, with a doctorate in law and belonging to the Qajar nobility, had founded in October 1949 the National Front, a coalition of intellectuals, anti-British politicians and *bāzāris* backed by Ayatollah Kashani (1885–1962). It was fighting for the country's political and economic independence following the principle of a 'negative balance', which implied the rejection of all foreign concessions.¹²²

On 4 February 1949 an attempt on the life of the shah during a visit to the University of Tehran almost succeeded. This incident provided the government with an opportunity to outlaw the Tudeh Party. This further increased the displeasure of the Soviet Union, which had failed to obtain an oil concession in the north of Iran in spite of the promises made by Qavam. The five prime ministers who followed Qavam in the next four years (December 1947–March 1951) were all preoccupied by the oil question and some, such as Hazhir (1902–49) and General Razmara (1901–51), lost their lives because of it.¹²³ They were assassinated by the *Fadā'iyān-e Eslām*, a small group of 'dedicated followers of Islam' which, during the 12 years of its existence (1943–55), carried out several political assassinations to obtain the enforcement of the *sharī'a* and the suppression of irreligious behaviour.¹²⁴

120. Cottam, 1979, pp. 70–3, 124–9.

121. Azimi, 1989, pp. 147–64.

122. Katouzian, 1990, pp. 51–77.

123. Hazhir was assassinated on 3 November 1949, a year after being appointed minister of the court.

124. Keddie and Zarrinkub, 1965, pp. 882–3.

The shah's political and economic ambitions became increasingly apparent after the failed attempt on his life: in March 1949 he launched his first seven-year economic development plan; two months later, a special Constituent Assembly granted him the power to dissolve parliament and passed a law establishing the senate (for which provision had been made in the 1906 constitution), half of whose 60 members were to be appointed by the shah. In November 1950 the shah left for the United States to obtain financial, technical and military assistance under the Truman Plan. However, in the eyes of the Iranian Government, the American assistance was insufficient.

In 1951 the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by Mosaddeq, who had become prime minister on 29 April, plunged the country into political and economic turmoil. Mosaddeq, who took full powers from August 1952, angered the shah on several occasions. Nor did some of his measures meet with the approval of the National Front.¹²⁵ The quarrel between Mosaddeq and the shah ended on 19 August 1953 with a coup led by General Zahedi (1888–1962) with financial support from the CIA.¹²⁶ Mosaddeq was arrested and the shah, who had left the country a few days earlier, returned to Tehran. Zahedi was appointed prime minister and Mosaddeq, arraigned before a military court on a charge of high treason, was found guilty on 21 December and sentenced to three years' imprisonment.¹²⁷

During Zahedi's term of office (1953–5), the oil crisis was resolved by an agreement signed in October 1954 between the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and a consortium of British (40 per cent), American (40 per cent), French and Dutch (20 per cent) oil companies.¹²⁸ The United States thus emerged as winner in the trial of strength between Mosaddeq and Britain. From then on Iran, whose geography made it the neighbour of the Soviet Union and whose geology supplied it with large quantities of oil, became the cherished and grateful ally of the Americans. This circumstance dominated the foreign policy of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi for the last 25 years of his reign, especially since his policy of 'positive nationalism' led him to give priority to the army in order to better secure Iran's independence. However, in view of Iran's military requirements, this policy brought him into an ever-closer alliance with the United States and thus involved the country in the Cold War.

It was in this context that, in October 1955, Iran signed the Baghdad Pact and joined the union made up of Iraq, Turkey, Britain and Pakistan to consolidate

125. Katouzian, 1990, pp. 78–176; Bill and Louis (eds.), 1988.

126. Roosevelt, 1979. For an account of this coup from a royalist standpoint, see Pahlavi, 1961, pp. 99–110.

127. After serving his sentence, Mosaddeq spent the rest of his life at Ahmadabad, where he died on 5 March 1967.

128. Stobaugh, 1978, pp. 213–15.

the 'green belt' south of the Soviet Union. Following a coup in Iraq on 14 July 1958, which overthrew the Hashemite monarchy and tipped the country into the Soviet camp, the Baghdad Pact was replaced by the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).¹²⁹ In March 1959 the shah signed an agreement with the United States under which the latter would come to the assistance of Iran if it were attacked. This agreement did not prevent the shah from promising the Soviet Union not to allow foreign missile bases to be established on Iranian soil (September 1962),¹³⁰ a strategy that produced a slight warming of relations with the Soviet Union.

To strengthen relations with his neighbours in the east, the shah intervened in the diplomatic tussle between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which signed a declaration of friendship in Tehran in May 1963. As for the dispute between Iran and Afghanistan over the sharing of the Helmand, a neutral tripartite Helmand River Delta Commission with representatives from Canada, Chile and the United States, set up at the request of the Iranian and Afghan governments, had studied the whole question between 1948 and 1951, but the arbitration made public in February 1951 had not been approved by the Iranian Government, which wanted a greater share of the Helmand's waters.¹³¹ In 1972, disturbed by the recently signed treaty between the Soviet Union and Iraq, the shah decided to resolve the Helmand problem as quickly as possible: after the necessary negotiations, a bipartite commission signed the 'Afghan-Iranian Helmand river water treaty' in Kabul on 13 March 1973. Iran's share was fixed at a level slightly higher than by the previous arbitration (an annual average of 26m³/second as against 22m³/second in 1951).¹³² On 29 May 1973 the treaty was ratified by the *Majles* and on 16 July it was promulgated by the Afghan parliament.

The very next day, there was a *coup d'état* in Afghanistan: the monarchy of Zahir Shah (1933–73) was overthrown by his cousin Mohammad Daud (1909–78), who proclaimed a republic on 17 July 1973 and became the first president of Afghanistan (see Chapter 19). The new regime, which needed Iran's financial assistance, ratified the treaty on the sharing of the Helmand river. The text was officially exchanged in Tehran in June 1977, thus ending more than a century of boundary disputes between the two countries. Trade relations were also to be strengthened, but were held in check in April 1978 by the coup that brought to power the communist Nur Mohammad Taraki (1978–9), a representative of the Khalq faction of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).¹³³

129. Digard, Hourcade and Richard, 1996, pp. 116–17.

130. Griffith, 1978, p. 376.

131. Balland, 1990, pp. 413–14.

132. *Ibid.*, p. 414.

133. Gille, 1984, pp. 189–95.

From an economic point of view, the income from oil and American assistance during the last 25 years of the shah's reign enabled the government to implement five more economic development plans which included numerous major hydroelectric projects. These plans were boosted by a programme of reforms called the 'White Revolution', or 'Revolution of the Shah and the People', which was approved by a national referendum in January 1963. The most important principles of this programme were agrarian reform, the emancipation of women, the campaign against illiteracy and the formation of a health corps to provide basic health care in rural areas.¹³⁴ The programme was opposed by two powerful groups: the National Front and the Liberation Movement of Iran (*Nehzat-e Āzādi-ye Irān*), founded in 1961 by religious intellectuals such as Mehdi Bazargan (1907–94) and by progressive 'ulamā' such as Mahmud Taleqani (1912–79). The demonstrations organized in June 1963 in Tehran and other major cities were severely repressed. The State Intelligence and Security Organization (SAVAK), created in 1957, arrested massive numbers of the regime's opponents. One of the religious leaders arrested was Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini (1902–89), who was released on 2 August and placed under house arrest. But in October 1964, after parliament had ratified a law granting diplomatic immunity to American servicemen and their families residing in Iran, Khomeini criticized the shah for having capitulated once again to the Americans. The following month the ayatollah was arrested and exiled, first to Turkey and then to Iraq.¹³⁵ In retaliation, the prime minister Hasan 'Ali Mansur (1923–65) was mortally wounded on 21 January 1965, and on 10 April an attempt was made on the shah's life by a religious group called the *Hezb-e Melal-e Eslāmi* (Party of the Islamic Nations).¹³⁶

In regard to domestic policy, when Zahedi, prime minister after the *coup d'état*, was replaced by Hoseyn 'Ala' (1955–7), the shah made further attempts to open up the political spectrum as the opportunity arose. In 1957 two political parties, *Melliyun* (the 'Nationalists') and *Mardom* ('the People'), were created by the regime with the aim of establishing a Western-style parliamentary system. Prime ministers such as M. Eqbal (1957–60), J. Sharif-Emami (1960–1), 'A. Amini (1961–2) and A. 'Alam (1962–4) went along with this artifice of a political opening. As for 'A. Mansur (1962–5), in December 1963 he created a new party, *Irān-e Novin* ('New Iran'), which replaced the *Melliyun* and enabled the bipartite political system to continue in a new climate. In March 1975 the shah took a step that he later recognized as having been a mistake: he ordered the dissolution of those two parties, leaving a single party,

134. Savory, 1993, p. 447; Denman, 1978, pp. 253–301.

135. Digard, Hourcade and Richard, 1996, pp. 128–9.

136. Taheri, 1987, p. 60.

the *Rastākhiz-e Irān* (Resurgence of Iran), with Amir ‘Abbas Hoveyda (1916–79), prime minister since 1965, as leader.¹³⁷

With the succession to the throne assured by the birth on 31 October 1960 of Crown Prince Reza, the child of his third marriage, with Farah Diba, the shah celebrated his coronation on 26 October 1967, his 48th birthday.¹³⁸ A few weeks before, on 7 September, his health being increasingly affected by a high level of lymphocytes in the blood, he had had the constitution amended to enable Empress Farah to act as regent in the event of his death before the crown prince attained the age of 20.¹³⁹ In October 1971, to mark the first decade of the White Revolution, the state organized imposing ceremonies at Persepolis for the ‘2,500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian empire’ to which monarchs and heads of state from all over the world were invited. These festivities, most impressive for foreigners but scandalous in the eyes of the regime’s opponents, ushered in a period in which personal rule by the shah reached its zenith: in September 1965 parliament awarded him the title of ‘King of Kings, Light of the Aryans’ (*Shāhanshāh Āryā-Mehr*).¹⁴⁰

Between 1973 and 1975 Iran, having become the ‘policeman of the Persian Gulf’, benefited from a spectacular boom in the petroleum industry. Major projects in the nuclear, chemical and other industries, but also in urban development, were signed with France, Germany and other Western powers. However, the backlash from the boom, owing to a fall in the demand for oil, severely destabilized the Iranian economy. In August 1977 Hoveyda was replaced as prime minister by a technocrat trained in the United States, Jamshid Amuzegar, who failed to calm a seriously overheated economy.¹⁴¹

After the election of the Democrat Jimmy Carter as president of the United States (1977–81), the stability of the Iranian regime was undermined by an international human rights campaign. The shah had to make concessions by granting an amnesty to political prisoners, easing censorship, clamping down on corruption, and so on. He thus lost the initiative to the opposition, consisting of critical intellectuals, recalcitrant clerics, bazaar merchants, jealous aristocrats, provincial landowners, liberal democrats and rebellious students. Most of the latter were members or sympathizers of armed groups such as the *Fadā’iyān-e Khalq* (Selfless Devotees for the People) or the *Mojāhedīn-e Khalq* (Holy Warriors for the People). Many of them were inspired by the writings of ‘Ali Shari‘ati (1933–77), an intellectual who reinterpreted Islam in the light of

137. Pahlavi, 1980, p. 124.

138. Lapeyre, 1998, p. 105.

139. Savory, 1993, p. 447.

140. Lapeyre, 1998, pp. 100, 112–13; Digard, Hourcade and Richard, 1996, pp. 148–9, 152.

141. Graham, 1978, pp. 77–127.

Western political theories with the aim of constructing a revolutionary ideology.¹⁴²

First Sharif-Emami and then General Azhari (who followed Amuzegar as prime minister from August to December 1978) failed to control the situation owing to increasingly widespread strikes and repeated demonstrations, some of which, like the one on 8 September, were violently repressed.¹⁴³ The rising discontent crystallized around Ayatollah Khomeini, who in October 1978, after his expulsion from Iraq, moved to the Paris suburb of Neauphle-le-Château from where he conducted an intense propaganda campaign with an international impact against the regime.¹⁴⁴ On 31 December 1978 the shah appointed one of his secular opponents, Shapur Bakhtiyar (1915–91), as head of the government in a last attempt to save the monarchy and left the country on 16 January 1979 in the hope of returning later, as he had done in 1953. A few days afterwards, on 1 February, Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile, to be welcomed by a jubilant crowd who called him Imam. On 5 February he appointed Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister. General Huyser, an American envoy sent to Iran in January 1979 by President Carter, then succeeded in dissuading the chiefs of the Iranian army from attempting a *coup d'état*. The Bakhtiyar interlude lasted only a few weeks: 11 February 1979 saw the triumph of the revolution and the end of the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who was to die in exile in Cairo on 27 July 1980.¹⁴⁵

The Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini (1979–89)

The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, approved by a referendum on 1 April 1979, was followed by the drafting of a new constitution, also approved by referendum in December 1979. Under this regime, political authority and the law are subject to the rules of Islam. In practice, this implies a duality of powers if not of institutions: the state is run by a president of the republic, elected every four years, and by a government headed by a prime minister (in 1989 the post was abolished by an amendment to the constitution when 'Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani became president of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1989–97)). The president and his government are responsible to an Islamic Consultative Assembly (*Majles-e Shurā-ye Eslāmi*) of 270 deputies

142. Bill, 1988, pp. 194–5.

143. Lapeyre, 1998, p. 129.

144. The situation of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iraq became more and more difficult after the Iran–Iraq agreement signed in Algiers in 1975. The two countries put an end to their border disputes but also promised to prevent mutually hostile actions.

145. Lapeyre, 1998, pp. 130–42; Richard, 1993, pp. 35–6.

elected every four years by universal suffrage. A Council of Guardians of the Constitution (*Shurā-ye Negahbān-e Qānūn-e Asāsi*) rules on the conformity with the precepts of Islam of the laws voted by the *Majles*. In the event of disagreement between the Council of Guardians and the *Majles*, an Expediency Discernment Council (*Majma'-e Tashkis-e Maslahat-e Nezām*) is empowered to decide on the ratification of a law or its repeal. Sovereignty lies in the hands of the Supreme Guide of the Revolution (*Vali-ye Faqih*), who may intervene in political, military, religious or other matters. For the first 10 years following the revolution, while Ayatollah Khomeini was still alive, this power was unquestionably his. As a result, the provisional government of Bazargan (February–November 1979) and the three presidents who followed (Abol-Hasan Banisadr, January 1980–June 1981; Mohammad 'Ali Raja'i, July–August 1981; and 'Ali Khamene'i, October 1981–June 1989) ruled the country while respecting and taking into account the views of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In the area of domestic policy, the most important events of these first 10 years were: the arrest and execution of the principal representatives of the former regime; the creation of popular armed forces such as the Committees and Guardians of the Revolution to ensure the survival of the republic; the repression of Kurdish and Turkmen uprisings; the temporary closure (1980–3) of the universities as part of a cultural revolution; the assassination of supporters and high-ranking personalities of the Islamic Republic of Iran by terrorist groups; and the systematic repression of all left-wing groups, which marked the victory of the *'ulamā'* within the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the economic front, the Islamic Republic of Iran established state control over the nation's industries with the aim of achieving national self-sufficiency (*khod-kafā'i*), the predominant economic slogan of the government. Such forms of state control of the economy, while allowing the private sector to prosper in the black market, created new social tensions, especially as the war against Iraq and conflicts within Iran soon absorbed all energies.¹⁴⁶

In foreign policy, two events with international repercussions marked the first 10 years of the Islamic Republic of Iran: the taking hostage of American diplomats in Tehran by Islamic militants (November 1979–January 1981) and the triggering by Saddam Hussein of a war against Iran (September 1980–July 1988). The trial of strength with the Americans, which ended with the freeing of the hostages after 444 days, led indirectly to the defeat of Carter by Reagan (president from 1981 to 1989) in the US elections.¹⁴⁷ The hostage question also created political and economic problems for the Islamic Republic of Iran,

146. Digard, Hourcade and Richard, 1996, pp. 174–8.

147. Salinger, 1981; Sick, 1991.

the most serious of which was the embargo decreed by the US Government and followed to some extent by other countries.

The Iran–Iraq war also blocked all prospects of economic development for the country and paralysed for a long time its most important oil-producing province. Having refused to end the war in 1982 when the Islamic Republic of Iran had the upper hand, Ayatollah Khomeini finally accepted a ceasefire only because of the country's extreme psychological exhaustion.¹⁴⁸ The war produced neither victor nor vanquished, but the country now had to remodel its entire diplomatic strategy towards the Muslim world: the expansion of the revolution, the key element of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy in its first 10 years, was subsequently stepped up in the Near and Middle East. In this connection, the government's influence over the Shi'ite groups in Afghanistan during the Russian invasion (1979–89) became increasingly evident and sometimes decisive.¹⁴⁹

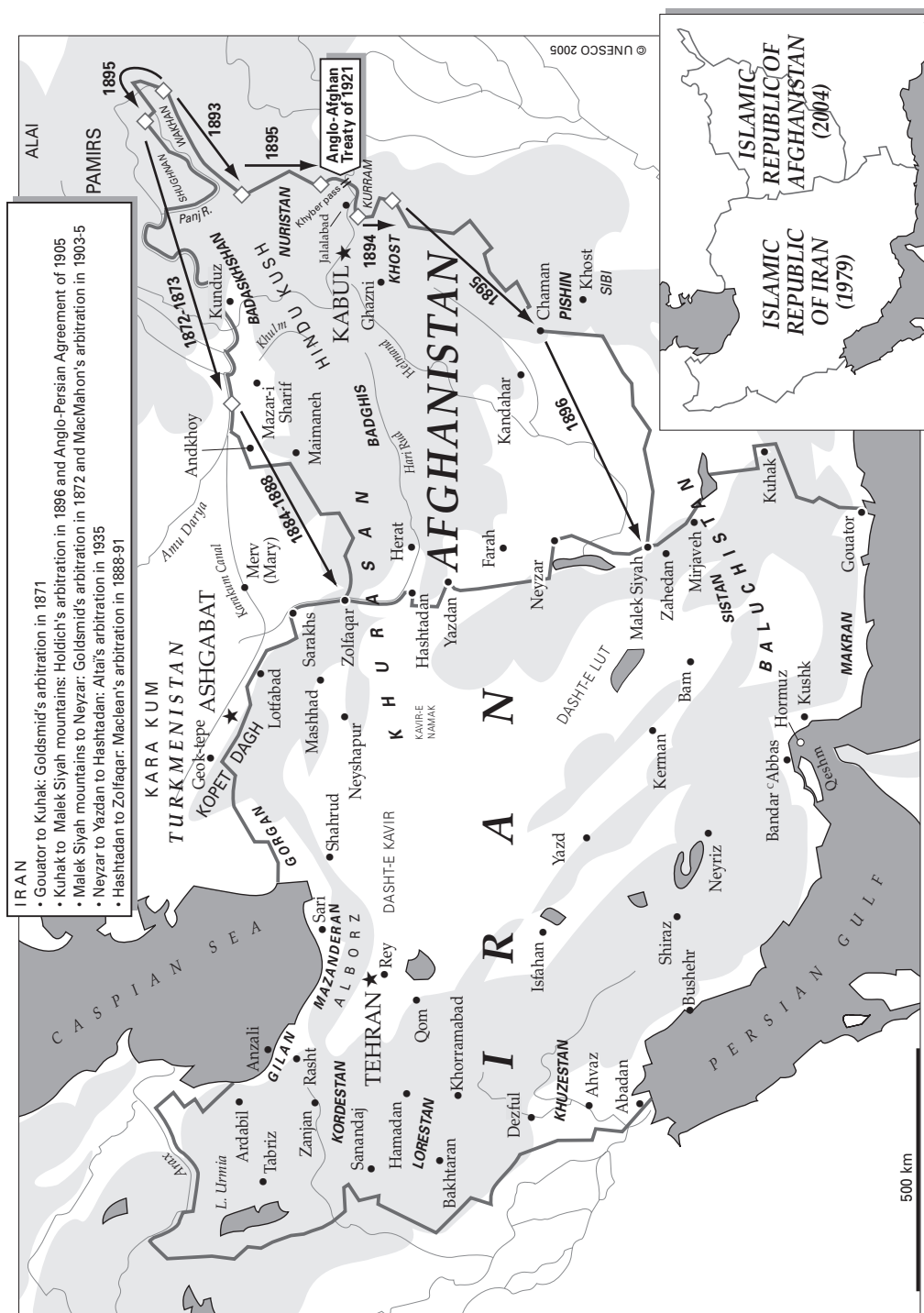
In the last few months of his life, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran launched a *fatwā* (edict of anathema) against Salman Rushdie, a British novelist of Indian origin and author of *The Satanic Verses*, virtually condemning him to death for the 'blasphemous' content of his book. This decision had an impact on the Islamic Republic of Iran's relations with Western countries: it took several years and great efforts by the authorities of the Islamic Republic to return them to normal.

Ayatollah Khomeini died on 4 June 1989. As only a few weeks before his death he had rejected his designated successor, Ayatollah Mohammad 'Ali Montazeri, it was thought that internecine strife would split the regime. But the transfer of power took place calmly: the Assembly of Experts (*Majles-e Khebrgān*) elected as Supreme Guide the 50-year-old former president of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Sayyed 'Ali Khamene'i (born on 15 July 1939).

Unlike the last four shahs of Iran, who all died abroad, Ayatollah Khomeini died in the Islamic Republic of Iran and was buried south of Tehran, where the government soon constructed an immense sanctuary that became the venue for official ceremonies and above all the goal of popular pilgrimage. The intransigent personality of Imam Khomeini made a decisive contribution to the success of the revolution and has undoubtedly shaped the new institutions. The authorities of the post-Khomeini Islamic Republic of Iran are trying to preserve them while taking account of recent political developments in the international arena, in particular the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, which has enabled the Islamic Republic of Iran to rediscover former cultural links and economic interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

148. Gieling, 1999.

149. Emadi, 1995, pp. 1–12; Jalali, 2000, pp. 141–6.



MAP 6. Afghanistan and Iran.

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CHAPTER 22

Part One: Northern Central Asia

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